DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 182 830 EA 012 438

AUTHOR Love, Ruth B.
TITLE Women in School Administration: The Route to the Top.
INSTITUTION Oakland Public Schools, Calif.
PUB DATE 14 Feb 80
NOTE 15p.: Keynote address at the National Council of Administrative Women in Education (San Diego, CA, February 14, 1980).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Administration; Equal Opportunities (Jobs); *Females; *Feminism; Sex Discrimination; *Sex Fairness; *Sex Stereotypes; *Working Women

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses some of the ways women can combat inequities in the educational system that keep them from attaining top administrative posts. It includes a discussion of attitudes and stereotypes that limit women's upward mobility. A checklist of recommendations for handling on-the-job problems is also offered, as are suggestions for helping other women through the use of networks. (LD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

R. Love

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

OAKLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Office of the Superintendent

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED182830

WOMEN IN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION: THE ROUTE TO THE TOP

By

Ruth B. Love
Superintendent

BEING IN A ROOM FULL OF POWERFUL WOMEN IS AN EXHILIRATING EXPERIENCE! THERE IS A SPIRIT OF COMRADERIE HERE - ALONG WITH A FEELING OF COMPETENCE - AND EXCITEMENT.

AND THAT EXCITEMENT IS FULLY JUSTIFIED, BECAUSE THE WOMEN ATTENDING THIS CONFERENCE ARE QUIETLY MAKING HISTORY - BY TAKING THEIR PLACES AS TOP LEVEL LEADERS IN THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS OF THIS COUNTRY.

OF COURSE, EACH OF US HAS CARVED OUT A DIFFERENT ROUTE TO OUR PRESENT POSITION DEPENDING ON OUR PERSONALITY AND OPPORTUNITIES, BUT THERE ARE SOME COMMON STEPS THAT VIRTUALLY ALL OF US MUST TAKE.

PERHAPS THE FIRST OF THOSE STEPS IS TO TAKE A COLD, HARD LOOK AT THE REALITIES WHICH ALL WORKING WOMEN FACE - AND ARE LIKELY TO GO ON FACING FOR SOME TIME TO COME. IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE OVER RECENT YEARS, THERE ARE STILL SOME GLARING INEQUITIES WHICH CRY OUT FOR REMEDY.

HERE ARE A FEW HIGHLIGHTS - OR PERHAPS I SHOULD SAY "LOWLIGHTS" OF THAT PICTURE:

THOUGH THE UNITED STATES LABOR FORCE IS NOW ABOUT HALF FEMALE, WOMEN EARN ONLY 59¢ FOR EVERY DOLLAR EARNED BY MEN - AND THIS REPRESENTS A DROP

National Council of Administrative Women in Education, February 14, 1980, San Diego, California (Keynote Address)

EA 012 438

FROM 61¢ TEN YEARS AGO! IN FACT, WOMEN'S PAY COMPARED TO MEN'S HAS NOT CHANGED APPRECIABLY SINCE THE 1930'S.

IN 1976, WOMEN COLLEGE GRADUATES WHO WENT TO WORK RECEIVED AN AVERAGE SALARY OF $10,000 WHILE THE AVERAGE YOUNG MAN STARTED OUT AT $17,000 - AND THE DIFFERENTIAL REMAINS ABOUT THE SAME.

AT THE OTHER END OF THE EMPLOYMENT HIERARCHY, ONLY 2.3 PERCENT OF TOP EXECUTIVES EARNING $25,000 A YEAR OR MORE ARE WOMEN. AND OF THE NATION'S 2,500 LARGEST COMPANIES, ONLY 15 HAVE WOMEN CHIEF EXECUTIVES. SO WOMEN GENERALLY HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO.

ZEROING IN ON EDUCATION - WHERE WOMEN HAVE ALWAYS PLAYED A DOMINANT ROLE - THE FIGURES ARE EVEN MORE DISHEARTENING. ACCORDING TO A RECENT STUDY BY MARILYN NEIDIG (OF LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY), THE NUMBER OF WOMEN SCHOOL PRINCIPALS NATIONALLY HAS DECLINED FROM 37 PERCENT IN 1960 TO 13 PERCENT TODAY. NEIDIG FOUND THAT WOMEN REPRESENT ABOUT 85 PERCENT OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS, BUT ONLY ABOUT 18 PERCENT OF ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS.

AMONG SENIOR HIGHS, JUST 27 PERCENT OF THE PRINCIPALS ARE WOMEN - AND LESS THAN 1 PERCENT OF SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS ARE FEMALE. IN OTHER WORDS, THOSE OF US WHO ARE SUPERINTENDENTS CAN CAUCUS IN A TELEPHONE BOOTH AND PLAN STRATEGIES.

THERE ARE MANY REASONS FOR THE INEQUALITIES REPRESENTED BY THESE STATISTICS - REASONS WE MUST FULLY UNDERSTAND BEFORE WE CAN COMBAT THEM. "KNOW THY ENEMY" IS STILL EXCELLENT ADVICE!

THE MOST INSIDIOUS ASPECT OF THE ENEMY IS EXTREMELY HARD TO DEFINE - AND EVEN HARDER TO CONFRONT - BECAUSE IT EXISTS PRIMARILY IN PEOPLE'S MINDS.

IT IS THE BODY OF ATTITUDES HELD BY MANY MEN - AND QUITE A FEW WOMEN TOO - WHICH PLACES ALL WOMEN INTO A SINGLE CATEGORY, AND THEN CLAIMS THAT PEOPLE IN THAT CATEGORY ARE:

-- LESS DEMOCRATIC THAN MEN,

-- MORE TEMPERAMENTAL THAN MEN,

-- THAT THEY CAN'T "HOLD THEIR OWN,"

-- ARE UNWILLING TO MAKE LONG-TERM COMMITMENTS,

-- ARE LESS QUALIFIED THAN MEN,

-- THAT THEY DON'T REALLY HAVE TO WORK AND ARE TAKING JOBS AWAY FROM MEN WHO NEED THEM MORE.

THESE ATTITUDES ARE CLEARLY MIRRORED IN OUR EVERYDAY LANGUAGE, WHERE THEY CAN HAVE A SUBTLE BUT CORROSIVE EFFECT. THESE ATTITUDES MANIFEST THEMSELVES IN STEREOTYPES ABOUT WOMEN. EVEN WHEN THE BEHAVIOR OF MEN AND WOMEN IS SIMILAR, IT IS INTERPRETED DIFFERENTLY.

FOR EXAMPLE, A MAN WHO FORGETS THINGS MAY BE CALLED "ABSENTMINDED," WHILE A WOMAN IS LABELED AS "SCATTERBRAINED." A SENSITIVE MALE EXECUTIVE IS OFTEN IDENTIFIED AS "CREATIVE," WHILE HIS FEMALE COUNTERPART IS CRITICIZED AS "EMOTIONAL" - OR CONVERSELY, A FEMALE MANAGER IS BRANDED AS "COLD," WHILE A MAN WITH SIMILAR CHARACTERISTICS IS "LOGICAL."

THE LIST GOES ON - A MAN WHO IS ORGANIZED IS "A GOOD PLANNER"; A WOMAN, A "SCHEMER" - AND THE ULTIMATE PUT-DOWN - A MAN WHO DEMONSTRATES SENSITIVITY IS CONSIDERED "INSIGHTFUL"; A WOMAN, "INTUITIVE."

THESE STEREOTYPED ATTITUDES ARE BORN IN CHILDHOOD AND NURTURED IN SEXIST EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS - AND THEY DIE HARD.

A VERY PERCEPTIVE OBSERVER OF HUMAN NATURE ONCE SAID, "YOU CAN'T USE LOGIC TO TALK PEOPLE OUT OF IDEAS THEY ARRIVED AT ILLOGICALLY."

NO MATTER HOW STRONG THE EVIDENCE TO THE CONTRARY, NO MATTER HOW MANY COMPETENT WOMEN DOCTORS, LAWYERS, BUSINESS EXECUTIVES - OR SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS WE SEE IN ACTION, ALL OF US TEND TO FALL BACK, UNCRITICALLY, INTO OUR COMFORTABLE OLD PREJUDICES.

THE ONLY WAY TO COMBAT NEGATIVE ATTITUDES LIKE THESE IN OURSELVES AND OTHERS IS TO BE CONSCIOUS OF THEM WHEN THEY SURFACE, AND TO DELIBERATELY REFUTE AND REJECT THEM.

BUT, AS WE'VE ALL LEARNED THE HARD WAY, ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS. ULTIMATELY, TO CORRECT THESE STEREOTYPES, WE MUST FIRST BELIEVE AND THEN DEMONSTRATE THAT WE CAN "DO THE JOB" - VIRTUALLY ANY JOB - AS WELL OR BETTER THAN A MAN COULD DO IT.

SOME OF US HAVE BEEN WORKING ON THIS PROBLEM LONG ENOUGH TO KNOW THAT SOME METHODS ARE BETTER THAN OTHERS FOR GETTING INTO THE WORLD OF "MEN'S WORK" - AND FOR SUCCEEDING AND RISING THERE.

IN MY OPINION, THE FIRST PREREQUISITE FOR "MAKING IT" IN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION IS TO HAVE SERIOUS PERSONAL GOALS FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE - AND A PROFOUND COMMITMENT TO MEETING THOSE GOALS.

AS BRITISH PRIME MINISTER MARGARET THATCHER PUT IT, "I DIDN'T SET OUT TO ARRIVE HERE AT ALL. I JUST SET OUT BELIEVING VERY PASSIONATELY CERTAIN THINGS AND TAKING EACH OPPORTUNITY AS IT CAME, AND THE ASTONISHING THING IS THAT THE BALL HAS BOUNCED RIGHT ON EACH OCCASION."

WHAT MRS. THATCHER DIDN'T MENTION WAS THAT EACH TIME THE BALL BOUNCED, SHE WAS READY TO CATCH IT - AND THAT IS CLEARLY ANOTHER REQUIREMENT FOR ADVANCEMENT.

WE MUST BE PREPARED WHEN THE CHANCES COME - AS FULLY QUALIFIED AS POSSIBLE.

A "WOMEN'S LIB" POSTER OF A FEW YEARS BACK READ, "WHATEVER WOMEN DO, THEY MUST DO TWICE AS WELL AS MEN TO BE THOUGHT HALF AS GOOD."

IN SPITE OF THE OBVIOUS HYPERBOLE, THERE'S A GRAIN OF TRUTH THERE - SO IT'S WISE TO GET THE BEST TRAINING AND CREDENTIALS AVAILABLE BEFORE AIMING FOR A TOP MANAGEMENT POSITION.

MARY ROEBLING, WHO IS CHAIRWOMAN OF NEW JERSEY'S $74 MILLION NATIONAL STATE BANK, ECHOES THIS ADVICE. "MANY WOMEN," SHE SAYS, "HAVEN'T DEVELOPED THEIR TALENTS SUFFICIENTLY. THEY HESITATE TO GO TO NIGHT SCHOOL AND TO TAKE THOSE EXTRA HOURS. THEY'RE VERY APT TO WANT THEIR POSITIONS ONLY FROM 9 TO 5."

IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION, EVEN MORE THAN IN BUSINESS, ADVANCED ACADEMIC WORK IS ESSENTIAL. A DOCTORATE HAS BECOME ALMOST A REQUIREMENT FOR TOP POSTS - AND MANY WOMEN WHO EARN ONE WHILE WORKING AND/OR CARING FOR A FAMILY WON'T HAVE ANY PROBLEM RECOGNIZING THAT A 9 TO 5 DAY IS AN UNOBTAINABLE DREAM, EXCEPT PERHAPS ON SUNDAYS IN THE SUMMERTIME!

BUT IT TAKES EVEN MORE THAN CLEAR GOALS, SOLID CREDENTIALS AND A WILLINGNESS TO WORK HARD TO CLIMB THE ADMINISTRATIVE LADDER. IT'S AN OBVIOUS BUT LITTLE NOTED FACT THAT EVERY TOP EXECUTIVE WAS ONCE A CAPABLE SUBORDINATE - A TASK THAT REQUIRES ITS OWN SPECIAL SKILLS.

IT HAS OFTEN BEEN POINTED OUT, WITH SOME ACCURACY, THAT WE HAVE DONE A POOR JOB OF TEACHING YOUNG WOMEN THOSE SKILLS IN THIS COUNTRY. UNTIL RECENTLY, FEW AMERICAN GIRLS LEARNED, AS THEY WERE GROWING UP, TO BE TEAM PLAYERS.

THEY DID NOT - AND TO A LARGE EXTENT STILL DO NOT - PARTICIPATE IN ROUGH GAMES AND INTER-SCHOLASTIC SPORTS IN WHICH THERE IS A GREAT DEAL OF INTERDEPENDENCE REQUIRED - AS WELL AS ADHERENCE TO SOME VERY FIRM RULES.

INSTEAD, THE EMPHASIS FOR GIRLS IS USUALLY PUT SOLELY ON INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENT - A POOR PREPARATION FOR BEING AN EFFECTIVE STAFF MEMBER IN MOST INSTITUTIONS.

MARGARET MEAD ONCE CLAIMED THAT THE ISRAELI ARMY PULLED WOMEN OUT OF ITS COMBAT FORCES BECAUSE THEY FOUGHT TOO FIERCELY AND INDEPENDENTLY. IT SEEMS THERE ARE EVEN RULES AND LIMITS IN THE "GAME OF WAR" WHICH SOME WOMEN DO NOT KNOW.

IN A SENSE, THE SAME KIND OF PROBLEM CAN ARISE IN AN OFFICE OR SCHOOL.

A STOCKBROKER NAMED ROY C. SMITH RECENTLY PUBLISHED AN ARTICLE THAT I THINK SUGGESTS SOME EXCELLENT WAYS OF CORRECTING THIS LACK OF TEAM SPIRIT. HE TITLES HIS RECOMMENDATIONS: "HOW TO BE A GOOD SUBORDINATE" - THE PREREQUISITE TO BECOMING A GOOD LEADER IN MOST ORGANIZATIONS.

FIRST, SMITH ADVISES, VISUALIZE YOUR JOB AS CLEARLY AS POSSIBLE. KNOW EXACTLY WHAT HAS BEEN DELEGATED TO YOU - AND DO IT. IF YOUR SUPERIOR HAS TO DO MORE THAN GUIDE YOU - YOU ARE OPERATING BELOW PAR.

OF COURSE, THE ONLY WAY YOU WILL BE ABLE TO TAKE ON YOUR FULL SHARE OF THE JOB, HE POINTS OUT, IS BY GAINING THE WHOLEHEARTED CONFIDENCE OF YOUR SUPERIOR - AND SMITH HAS SOME ADVICE ABOUT HOW TO DO THAT, TOO:

UNDERSTAND THE DEMANDS AND DIFFICULTIES OF YOUR SUPERIOR'S JOB, HE SAYS. ASK YOURSELF, "IF I WERE THE SUPERIOR, WHAT WOULD I EXPECT FROM MY SUBORDINATE?"

THEN - BE RELIABLE; BE INFORMED, CAREFUL AND ACCURATE; ANTICIPATE QUESTIONS, AND WHEN YOU MAKE MISTAKES, ADMIT THEM.

NEXT, KNOW YOUR STUFF. EARN A REPUTATION AS SOMEONE WHO COULD DO A VARIETY OF DIFFICULT ASSIGNMENTS IN THE ORGANIZATION.

TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR OWN AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY - BUT DON'T WAIT TOO LONG TO ASK FOR HELP WHEN YOU REALLY NEED IT.

HE GOES ON - DON'T HOVER AROUND YOUR SUPERIOR LOOKING FOR PRAISE OR FEEDBACK, AND DON'T BECOME A NUISANCE BECAUSE YOU CAN'T ACCEPT CRITICISM OR GET ALONG WITH CO-WORKERS.

COMMUNICATE WHAT YOU'RE DOING REGULARLY, CLEARLY AND SIMPLY - PREFERABLY IN WRITING - TO YOUR SUPERIOR (DON'T SUFFER IN SILENCE).

BE YOUR OWN TOUGHEST CRITIC. GRADE YOURSELF, AND DON'T ACCEPT YOUR OWN EXCUSES.

DON'T HAVE TOO MANY NEW IDEAS, MOST OF WHICH ARE NEW ONLY TO YOU AND HAVE BEEN TRIED BEFORE, INSTEAD OF DOING THE BASIC WORK REQUIRED.

AND FINALLY, STRETCH YOURSELF - DEVELOP THE COMPETENCE OF YOUR OWN SUBORDINATES, SO THAT YOU CAN TAKE ON NEW RESPONSIBILITIES AND MOVE IN THE DIRECTION OF BECOMING A GOOD SUPERVISOR YOURSELF.

SMITH'S ADVICE IS MOSTLY JUST COMMON SENSE, BUT IT'S SURPRISING HOW MANY PEOPLE - MEN AND WOMEN - FAIL TO FOLLOW IT, YET STILL EXPECT TO RISE IN THE HIERARCHY.

FOR WOMEN WHO DO MAKE THE MOVE FROM BEING PRODUCTIVE SUBORDINATES TO BEING ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERS, THERE ARE USUALLY SOME VERY SPECIALIZED PROBLEMS TO DEAL WITH - RIGHT AWAY.

MOST OF THESE SPECIALIZED PROBLEMS COULD BE CALLED "MEN WHO ARE UNCOMFORTABLE WORKING FOR A WOMAN" - BUT SOME, UNFORTUNATELY, MUST BE CLASSIFIED AS "WOMEN WHO ARE UNCOMFORTABLE WORKING FOR A WOMAN."

THE FIRST TIME I CAME UP AGAINST THIS PHILOSOPHY IN MY OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WAS AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION. AS A YOUNG, BLACK FEMALE BUREAU CHIEF FOR THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, I CERTAINLY HAD MY WORK CUT OUT FOR ME.

THE AVERAGE MAN ON MY STAFF WHEN I BEGAN WAS SOME 20 YEARS MY SENIOR. MOST OF THEM WERE VERY COOL TO THE IDEA OF A YOUNGER BOSS - AND A YOUNGER, FEMALE BOSS WAS REALLY TOO MUCH. THEY DIDN'T THINK I COULD POSSIBLY HAVE THE RIGHT, OR THE ABILITY, TO BE THERE.

AS SOON AS I SAW WHAT WAS GOING ON - AND THAT TOOK ABOUT 30 SECONDS - I KNEW MY FIRST TASK WAS TO OVERCOME THE PREJUDICE OF MY SUBORDINATES.

MY STRATEGY WAS SIMPLY TO ACT LIKE I WAS IN CHARGE - WHICH I WAS, LIKE I DESERVED AND MERITED THE POSITION - WHICH I DID, AND ACT LIKE A MODEL OF FAIRNESS WHO TREATED MY CO-WORKERS WITHOUT PREJUDICE - WHICH I TRIED TO BE.

WHENEVER QUESTIONS CAME UP LIKE "WHY DID YOU COME?" OR "HOW DID YOU GET HERE?" - I JUST DISCOUNTED THEM TOTALLY, BECAUSE I WASN'T RUNNING A PSYCHIATRIC CLINIC, AND I FELT THAT THOSE KINDS OF NEUROSES COULD BEST BE HANDLED BY SOMEONE ELSE. I ALSO LEARNED TO DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN MY PROBLEMS AND THE PROBLEMS OF COLLEAGUES. THEIR BIASES WERE CLEARLY THEIR PROBLEMS.

AFTER A LONG PERIOD OF TESTING, MOST OF THE PEOPLE IN MY DEPARTMENT BEGAN TO TRUST ME AND TO WORK WITH ME, JUST AS THEY WORKED WITH ANYONE ELSE.

FROM THEN ON, I - AND THEY - OFTEN FORGOT I WAS A FEMALE ADMINISTRATOR, I BECAME JUST AN ADMINISTRATOR.

BUT EVERY RULE HAS ITS EXCEPTIONS - AND THERE ARE TIMES TO REMEMBER WE ARE WOMEN - AND TO MAKE THE MOST OF IT.

THE INNATE QUALITIES OF WOMEN, AS WELL AS THE WAY WE ARE RAISED AND EDUCATED, GIVE US SOME STRONG ADVANTAGES.

TO QUOTE MAGGIE THATCHER ONCE AGAIN, "IN POLITICS, IF YOU WANT ANYTHING SAID, ASK A MAN: IF YOU WANT ANYTHING DONE, ASK A WOMAN." NOW THAT'S A "FEMINIST" STATEMENT.

THATCHER GOES ON TO EXPLAIN, "I THINK WOMEN TEND TO BE VERY MUCH MORE PRACTICAL, LESS THEORETICAL. THEY LOOK MUCH MORE TO THE LONG TERM, BECAUSE THEY ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE WORLD INTO WHICH THEIR CHILDREN WILL GROW. FAR MORE WOMEN HAVE EXPERIENCE OF MANAGEMENT THAN MEN, BECAUSE THEY ARE MANAGERS OF THEIR HOMES. THEY HAVE THE EXPERIENCE OF MAKING DECISIONS AND NOT PASSING THE BUCK."

THIS MAY BE TRUE, OR IT MAY NOT - BUT, EVEN MORE IMPORTANTLY, IS THE FACT THAT WOMEN HAVE TRADITIONALLY BEEN THE ONES WHO PRESERVED AND PASSED ALONG THE KEY VALUES OF SOCIETY AS MOTHERS AND AS TEACHERS.

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE MAINTAIN THESE FEMININE QUALITIES AS WE BECOME MANAGERS - THAT WE AVOID CREATING WHAT SOCIOLOGIST DAVID REISMAN HAS CALLED AN "ANDROGYNOUS SOCIETY," DEVOID OF THE HUMANE CONTRIBUTIONS WOMEN ARE PARTICULARLY SUITED TO MAKE.

AS WE TAKE ON MORE AND MORE ROLES OF LEADERSHIP, I FERVENTLY HOPE THAT WE WILL NOT BECOME HARD OR CALLOUS, WILL NOT ASSUME THAT WE HAVE TO PROVE SOMETHING OR CHANGE OUR PERSONALITIES TO DO THE JOB.

AND I AM ESPECIALLY CONCERNED THAT WE REMEMBER WE ARE WOMEN WHEN IT COMES TO GIVING OTHER WOMEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO MOVE UP TOO - BY MAKING YOUNGER WOMEN AWARE OF THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT EXIST, BY SPEAKING OUT IN FAVOR OF FEMALE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION - AND BY PARTICIPATING IN THE GROWING NUMBER OF "NETWORKS" OF PROFESSIONAL WOMEN NOW SPRINGING UP IN EVERY COMMUNITY.

THESE GROUPS ACT AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR THE "OLD SCHOOL TIES" RELIED ON BY MEN WHO WANT TO ADVANCE IN THEIR JOBS. NETWORK ORGANIZATIONS USUALLY OFFER BOTH FORMAL AND INFORMAL EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION, JOB AND EDUCATION COUNSELING AND WORKSHOPS ON SUCH TOPICS AS RESUME WRITING, PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS AND CAREER GOAL SETTING.

THEY PROVIDE A KIND OF JUNGLE GYM STRUCTURE WHICH WOMEN CAN CLIMB THROUGH, UP AND AROUND TO REACH THEIR CHOSEN LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY.

OF COURSE, TO MAKE THE BEST USE OF A NETWORK, EACH WOMAN MUST TAKE SOME PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR PLANNING HER OWN CAREER. UNTIL NOW, SOME OF US WERE SO PLEASED TO MAKE OUR WAY INTO EXECUTIVE JOBS THAT WE SIMPLY TOOK WHAT WAS GIVEN TO US, RATHER THAN MOVING TOWARD CLEAR CAREER OBJECTIVES.

NOW THAT THERE ARE MORE OPPORTUNITIES OUT THERE, WE NEED TO PICK AND CHOOSE OUR MOVES MORE CAREFULLY - TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE IN ACQUIRING THE EXPERIENCE AND THE TITLES WE NEED TO REACH OUR ULTIMATE GOALS.

FOR EXAMPLE, A WOMAN WHO IS AN ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT IN A SUBURBAN AREA AND WHO WANTS TO BE A BIG CITY SUPERINTENDENT SHOULD PROBABLY PLAN TO APPLY FOR JOBS AS AN ASSISTANT URBAN SUPERINTENDENT.

AND IT'S UP TO THOSE OF US WHO ARE ALREADY URBAN SUPERINTENDENTS - OR MANAGERS OF ANY KIND - TO MAKE ROOM FOR THE WOMEN WHO WANT TO AND ARE QUALIFIED TO JOIN US.

WHEN I ATTENDED MY VERY FIRST CABINET MEETING AS SUPERINTENDENT OF OAKLAND'S SCHOOLS, I SAW - AS I KNEW I WOULD - THAT I WAS THE ONLY WOMAN EXCEPT FOR THE SECRETARY.

I ASKED, "WHERE ARE THE OTHER WOMEN ADMINISTRATORS?" - KNOWING FULL WELL THAT THERE WEREN'T ANY AT THE ASSOCIATE SUPERINTENDENT LEVEL OR EVEN AT THE DIRECTOR LEVEL.

THERE WAS A COLD SILENCE, SO I KNEW THAT THAT WAS A SENSITIVE QUESTION.

I DECIDED TO PUSH THE POINT. "WELL," I ASKED, "ARE THEY JUST ABSENT TODAY, OR ARE WE HAVING A BOYCOTT? WHAT'S GOING ON?"

FINALLY SOMEONE SAID, "WE'VE NEVER HAD WOMEN IN THOSE JOBS." SO WE GOT INTO A LITTLE DISCUSSION ABOUT THAT.

WELL, WITHIN A MONTH, WE HAD A COUPLE OF VACANCIES - ONE RESIGNATION AND ONE REMOVAL. I APPOINTED AN ASSOCIATE SUPERINTENDENT WHO HAPPENED TO BE A WOMAN - A VERY COMPETENT WOMAN, OF COURSE, BECAUSE I WOULD NEVER EMPLOY PEOPLE JUST BECAUSE THEY ARE FEMALE - BUT BECAUSE THEY ARE QUALIFIED.

THE RUMORS THAT STARTED FROM THAT ONE APPOINTMENT WERE JUST AMAZING. PEOPLE SAID, "SHE'S GOING TO HAVE THE WHOLE CABINET BECOME FEMALE; THERE WON'T BE ANY MEN IN ADMINISTRATION."

AND I MUST ADMIT, I DIDN'T SQUELCH THOSE RUMORS RIGHT AWAY, BECAUSE, THOUGH THEY WERE WILDLY INACCURATE, THEY DID OPEN PEOPLE'S MINDS - AND WHAT'S EVEN BETTER, THEY MADE SOME OF MY STAFF "SHAPE UP" IN RECORD TIME.

ALL I WOULD HAVE TO DO IS ASK ONE OF THE MEN, "WHAT ABOUT A WOMAN FOR DATA PROCESSING DIRECTOR?" - AND, OH MY GOODNESS, THE DATA PROCESSING DIRECTOR BECAME AN INSTANT EXPERT BECAUSE HE WAS SO THREATENED.

IT WAS KIND OF FUN FOR A FEW WEEKS, BUT OF COURSE, I ABANDONED THIS "SHOCK THERAPY" AS SOON AS IT HAD SOME IMPACT, BECAUSE IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO BE A PROFESSIONAL IN DEALING WITH PEOPLE, TO SHOW THAT YOU ARE NOT GOING TO HAVE ANY SYSTEM OF RECRIMINATION.

TODAY, MY CABINET IS A WELL-BALANCED GROUP OF VERY ABLE MEN AND WOMEN, ALL OF WHOM I CAN TRUST TO DO THEIR JOBS WITH DEDICATION AND SKILL - THOUGHT WITH DIFFERING STYLES. WE NOW HAVE A WOMEN ASSOCIATE SUPERINTENDENT, A WOMAN DIRECTOR OF EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN, A WOMAN DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES, A WOMAN DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM, A WOMAN DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S CENTERS, WOMEN CARPENTERS, CRAFTSWOMEN, AND FOOD SERVICE WORKERS.

INCIDENTALLY, ONE SMALL ASPECT OF THAT DIFFERENCE IN STYLE CAN PROVE TO BE QUITE A HANDICAP FOR WOMEN.

I'VE NOTICE THAT SOME WOMEN IN MY ADMINISTRATION TEND TO FOLLOW ALL THE FORMAL RULES, ALL OF THE THINGS WE "GOOD LITTLE GIRLS" WERE TAUGHT TO DO - WITHOUT REALIZING THAT MANY MAJOR DECISIONS ARE MADE INFORMALLY.

FOR EXAMPLE, AFTER REGULAR WORKING HOURS IN THE OAKLAND SCHOOLS, IT'S QUITE THE THING TO DROP BY AND SEE THE "SUP" AT 5:30 OR 6:00. MEN

OFTEN DO THIS IF THERE'S SOMETHING THEY WANT TO CHAT ABOUT - BUT MOST WOMEN DO NOT. THEY ARE MORE LIKELY TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT FOR A FORMAL DISCUSSION.

NOW THIS IS THE KIND OF THING WE ARE TAUGHT TO DO, AND I'M NOT SUGGESTING THAT IT'S WRONG. I'M JUST SAYING THAT MEN WHO REALLY WANT TO MAKE AN IMPRESSION FIND THAT THE INFORMAL SYSTEM WORKS VERY WELL. I'D LIKE TO SEE WOMEN MAKE THE MOST OF THIS RESOURCE TOO.

THERE MAY BE A FEW OTHER USEFUL TECHNIQUES FOR WOMEN EXECUTIVES TO LEARN TOO - THE KINDS OF THINGS YOU DON'T HEAR ABOUT IN MANAGEMENT SEMINARS, THE SAVOIR FAIRE THAT COMES WITH LONG EXPERIENCE IN SEEKING AND FILLING ADMINISTRATIVE JOBS.

I'M REFERRING TO THINGS LIKE LEARNING TO BE MORE COMFORTABLE AND LESS DEFENSIVE IN OUR NEW ROLES - OR DEVELOPING A BETTER SENSE OF HUMOR TO LEAVEN OUR ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS - OR LEARNING NOT TO SETTLE FOR LOWER SALARIES THAN A MAN WOULD COMMAND IN THE SAME JOB, OR NOT TO FALL PREY TO ATTEMPTS TO DIVIDE AND CONQUER.

BUT I'M NOT WORRIED. I KNOW WE WILL LEARN WHATEVER WE NEED TO LEARN TO OPEN THE DOORS OF THE NATION'S EXECUTIVE SUITES - AND TO STRIDE THROUGH THEM WITH CONFIDENCE AND COMPETENCE.

IN THE DECADE OF THE 70'S, THE NUMBER OF WOMEN ON CORPORATE BOARDS OF DIRECTORS DOUBLED - AND AS WE MOVE INTO THOSE JOBS IN EVER GREATER NUMBERS, I AM CONVINCED THAT WE WILL INSTITUTE A WHOLE NEW FORM OF MANAGEMENT - A FEMININE FORM THAT IS ROOTED IN SOLID HUMAN VALUES, THAT NURTURES EVERYONE CONNECTED WITH IT, THAT ACCOMPLISHES PRACTICAL RESULTS WITH NO LOSS OF IDEALISM.

IN SHORT, I PREDICT THAT THE LIBERATION AND ELEVATION OF WOMEN WILL ULTIMATELY LEAD TO THE LIBERATION AND ELEVATION OF MEN, OF CHILDREN - AND OF ALL THE INSTITUTIONS OF THIS SOCIETY.

###